

# SERMON NOTES Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> June 2024

## sunnysidechurch

Theme: **Jesus in dispute**

Passages: **Mark 3.20-35, 1 Samuel 8.4-20**

**Some of the main themes from the sermon**

### **A sandwich**

Today's Gospel reading is a sandwich. There are two short passages about Jesus' relationship with his family: his natural family (v21, 32) and his chosen family, his followers (v34-35). The filling, between these two slices of bread, centres on a conflict between Jesus and some teachers of the law, who had come to Galilee from Jerusalem to check him out (v22-30). Let's start by looking at Jesus' and his two families.

### **Jesus' families**

It seems that Jesus' natural family were well intentioned. They were concerned for him (v21). They feel that they have a responsibility and a right to look after him 'for his own good'. But Jesus is his own person and to fulfil his calling (Mark 1.15) he needs to be a free agent. He also makes it clear that his followers are those who are closest to him. He has chosen them and they have chosen him.

### **Blood is thicker than water.**

I've always been a fan of Ian Rankin's Inspector Rebus novels. Set in Edinburgh and exploring the less glamorous side of Scotland's capital city, a place of drugs, gangsters, money laundering and murder. A gritty new adaptation is now on iPlayer and I've enjoyed watching it. There was a quote by Rebus in the final episode that made me stop and think: "There are laws and there are rules. Laws can change but the rules never do. 'Blood is thicker than water'. 'Don't grass on your mates'. 'An eye for an eye'. These never change." In the world of Rebus these 'rules' cause untold suffering.

### **Our ultimate allegiance**

We think of loyalty to our families and friends as being hugely important. We're right to do so. The love of our family and friends is, for many of us, a bedrock of our wellbeing. To know we are loved by those closest to us helps us navigate a world that is always uncertain and can be hostile. But families and friendship groups are not always safe and welcoming and even when they are, it is a mistake to idolise them.

### **The 'stronger one'**

Jesus reputation has obviously travelled, so that teachers of the Jewish law from Jerusalem have come to investigate. They want to find fault and, faced by his obvious gift in driving out demons can only claim that he is in cahoots with Satan (v22). This is ridiculous and Jesus duly ridicules them (v23-26). The truth, Jesus explains is that God's Kingdom has come (v27). He is the stronger one promised by John the Baptist (Mark 1.7).

### **The sin against the Holy Spirit**

The teachers of the law had seen something that restored life and made people whole (v22). To call this demonic is to shut the doors on God and bolt Him out (v29). It is to reject God absolutely.

### **Being willing to be different**

Looking at the different elements of this bible passage, it challenges us to look closely at Jesus. Do we see someone who is 'out of his mind' (v21) or demonic (v22)? Or do we see someone whose love and charisma invites us to follow him and become his 'brother and sister' (v35)? If so, are we willing to put him first in our lives – and what might that mean?

***Some questions for thought and discussion this week:***

- 1. Think about your family in all its complexity. What do you give thanks for? What concerns you? Talk about these things and pray about them.***
- 2. Think about the impact of the family you grew up with on your life as an adult. What do you give thanks for? What concerns you? Talk about these things and commit them to prayer.***
- 3. Have you ever been carried along with the crowd to say or do things that, on reflection, you regret? Looking forward, how can you ensure that you keep your judgement sound?***
- 4. What does it mean to put our allegiance to Jesus first? When might this be difficult? How have you navigated these difficulties in the past?***
- 5. Can you think of any instances when people have seen something obviously good happening and have condemned it as demonic? What do you think motivated those people?***
- 6. Was there anything else in today's sermon that gave you pause for thought? Discuss it with your home group.***